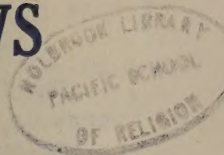


JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS



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Christians March for Freedom of Religion	1
"Technology, Man, and Church" is Urban Industrial Conference Theme	1
Japanese and American Church Leaders Probe Asia Problems	2
Conference with "Christian Matrimonial Agents"	3
International Student Seminar on "Being Human...."	3
Japan Keswick 1968	4
Prayers for Christian Unity	4
Seeking Dialog Re Enterprise's Visit to Sasebo	4
Death of Dr. Eitel	4

CHRISTIANS MARCH FOR FREEDOM OF RELIGION

by Akiko Yamaguchi

Hundreds of candle lights, mounted in paper lanterns, flickered in the cold wind of a February night as 500 Christians marched through the streets of Tokyo proclaiming Freedom of Religion and Thought in opposition to the revival of the myth of Japan's founding.

February 11 is a holiday which Christians prefer to call "The Day for Freedom of Religion" rather than "National Foundation Day," the latter being based on a myth in a historical document of the early 8th century. On this day, 1500 Christians gathered at Joshi Gakuin for a "Meeting on the Freedom of Religion." Prof. Saburo Ouchi of Yamanashi University spoke on "The Myth and the State," Dr. Kiyoko Takeda Cho of International Christian University on "The Emperor-system and Religion."

Pastors and lay men and women, including a considerable number of students from Tokyo Union Theological Seminary and Japan Lutheran Seminary, marched past the Diet to Hibiya Park after the meeting. Among the marchers were Rev. Masahisa Suzuki, Moderator of the Kyodan, and Rev. and Mrs. Takeshi Takasaki, Dr. Takasaki being president of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary.

Similar meetings were held in some fifteen other cities, including Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe, Nagoya, and Sendai.

"TECHNOLOGY, MAN, AND CHURCH" IS URBAN INDUSTRIAL CONFERENCE THEME

From a mining town in Hokkaido, labor centers in large cities and a newly developed industrial area in Kyushu, 55 workers--both clergy and lay--gathered for the Fourth NCCJ-sponsored Urban Industrial Evangelism Conference at Nagoya Sanke Kaikan, Nagoya, January 17-19.

Prof. Ryunosuke Taniguchi focussed on the conference theme, "Technology, Man, and Church," dealing with the estrangement of modern men as a result of rapid technological progress and the essential role of religion in resolving this estrangement.

The Conference visited the "Detroit of Japan"--Toyota City--and the Toyota Motors Co., Ltd. factory. Among the city's one million population, 30,000 persons are employed by Toyota Motors and many other workers are in related industries. The Koromo Lutheran Church serves the community through the Ikoi no ie Labor Center for young workers' study and recreation.

A panel discussion at the Koromo Church took up many problems of the contemporary industrial society and the Christian church. Said Rev. In Ha Lee of the Korean Christian Church of Kawasaki, "It is in this world that the Church should live. We are now involved in discovering the needs of the community where the church exists. We are trying to help people stand on their own feet." Rev. Satoshi Hirata of Kansai Labor Evangelism Fellowship discussed the increasing human tensions that automation is creating. "It is necessary to lead workers to a right understanding of their environment and of their future....One role of the church may be to help them analyze their own problems," Mr. Hirata concluded.

Rev. Haruo Koya of Takata Christ Episcopal Church, Kyoto, emphasized the need for laymen to participate in urban industrial mission. Yet he admitted this is difficult. "Is the mission of the church really carried on for workers?" someone asked. Someone else said that one's approach to urban industrial mission depends on one's understanding of human problems and one's ability to identify himself with the people suffering in the urban industrial world.

The daily Bible study was led by Rev. Issei Ogata of Koromo Lutheran Church, who showed the dynamic image of God as one who seeks for the lost people in modern society (Luke 15:1-2 and 16:1-8). Local church representatives reported on their industrial evangelism programs and opportunity was provided for group discussion.

Lively discussion ensued and constructive criticism of the conference was given to guide the planning of the next year's conference.

JAPANESE AND AMERICAN CHURCH LEADERS PROBE ASIA PROBLEMS

Believing that their churches have a contribution to make in the complex political situation of Asia, Japanese and American church leaders have agreed to probe in depth two of the crucial questions affecting peace in Asia--the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and the relationship of security and economic development.

Plans for a program of study that will involve an exchange of preparatory study papers and a three-day conference of thirty specialists and church leaders in Japan in September were drawn up by representatives of the Japan National Christian Council and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., who met at Ciso Academy House, Feb. 9-10.

Dr. Isamu Omura, Chairman of the NCCJ, presided at the consultation, while Prof. Yoshiaki Iisaka, chairman of the committee on international affairs and social problems, served as chairman. American representatives, en route from the EACC Bangkok meeting, were Dr. Robert S. Bilheimer, Dr. Donald Black, Dr. Eugene Smith and Rev. Newton Thurber. Japanese delegates included members of the committee on international affairs and social problems and representatives of various NCCJ-member churches and organizations. Attendance totalled forty.

Dr. Bilheimer, speaking at the Friday afternoon session, observed that "Vietnam raises the issues with which the United States is confronted throughout Asia; namely, nationalism and communism, the relationship between military security and national development, and international cooperation."

Dr. Masao Takenaka, Doshisha School of Theology professor of social ethics and the sociology of religion, warned against the danger of "social amnesia" as a result of the overwhelming complexities of modern political issues. He urged that the primary concern be the "people," criticizing the tendency to emphasize military power over economic power and the "power of the people."

The fall consultation will provide an opportunity for concerned persons of competence in Japan-America affairs to study together with the view to helping Japanese and American Christians be responsible citizens within their respective nations. Depth study of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty problem and the relationship of security and development in Asian countries will raise many of the basic issues involved in peace in Asia.

Dr. Bilheimer, Director of department of international affair NCCUSA, and Prof. Yoshiaki Iisaka and Rev. Sachio Hoshiyama, who are NCCJ department of international affairs and social problems co-chairmen, will serve as liaison persons for their respective planning committees. The location of the meeting, scheduled for Sept. 17-19, will be announced later.

CONFERENCE WITH "CHRISTIAN MATRIMONIAL AGENTS"

"Hunting for husbands is a difficult task for Christian girls," commented an experienced matchmaker, as members of the Family Life Committee of NCCJ conferred with "Christian matrimonial agents" from various denominations in the Tokyo area at the committee's monthly meeting on January 25.

The committee, which is concerned with the education of young adults who want to establish Christian homes, knows the difficulty young people face in finding Christian partners and realizes the need to make effective use of these "agents," who are mainly volunteers from among church women.

In almost any denomination, there are a few small committees for such a purpose. For instance, in the Kyoden there is a committee in each district. In the Episcopal Church there are "Isaac and Rebecca" groups of church women. The Evangelical Lutheran Church deals with the problem in the department of social welfare. These committees make out a card for each client and arrange for a meeting date. Yet most committees are now unable to make adequate arrangements because they usually have more girls than boys--the rate being as high as six to one.

"Generally speaking, Christian girls want to marry Christians, but Christian boys do not necessarily want Christian girls because they are optimistic about the possibility of their partners becoming Christians," was one observation.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SEMINAR ON "BEING HUMAN...."

Japanese students and foreign students are being invited to take part in the 11th Annual International Student Seminar sponsored by Waseda Hoshien University Christian Center and the National YMCA, March 14-18, at Tozanso, Gotemba.

The Seminar is described as "a quest to examine perspectives": to seek for a frame of reference and to begin to build a framework for understanding and effective response to the dramatic events taking place in today's rapidly changing society.

Dean of the seminar, to be conducted in Japanese and English, is Kentaro Shiozumi, of the staff of the World Student Christian Federation. Chaplain will be Rev. John Ross, campus minister, University of Washington, Seattle, and presently visiting secretary of Waseda Hoshien.

Lecturers will speak on nuclear power and international politics, mass society and democracy, the North-South gap, and faith and the modern world.

Application forms are available from the International Student Seminar of Waseda Hoshien, 550, 1-chome, Totsuka-machi, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo. The costs are ¥1,000 for application fee, ¥3,800 for participation fee.

1968 JAPAN KESWICK

Invitations have been mailed for the 7th Annual Keswick Convention to be held in Hakone Feb. 27-March 1. An attendance of 1200 is anticipated.

The Bible conference will be addressed by Dr. Paul Rees, minister-at-large of World Vision International and editor of World Vision, who is a frequent visitor to Japan, and by Dr. Christy Wilson, Jr., known for his evangelistic and social work in Afghanistan and his Arabic scholarship.

Persons attending the Convention will be housed at the Kowakien Hotel and the Japanese inn. The Keswick office is Room 42, Student Center 2 no 1, Surugadai, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo.

PRAYERS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

In what Dr. Isamu Omura said might symbolize "the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a Second Pentecost," Roman Catholics and Protestants joined in services of prayer for Christian Unity which were held in many cities during the week of January 21. At the St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Tokyo, 800 persons attended services held Sunday afternoon, January 21. (Dr. Omura is president of the NCCJ)

SEEKING DIALOG RE ENTERPRISE'S VISIT TO SASEBO

Sixty-six persons in the headquarters of The United Church of Christ in Japan wrote to American Christian friends at the Interchurch Center, 475 Riverside Drive New York, expressing their concern over the visit of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, Enterprise, to Japan and asking for an exchange of opinion on how the two groups might work together to help bring peace in Vietnam and the entire world.

DEATH OF DR. EITEL

Word has come of the death in Basel, Switzerland, of Dr. K. F. Eitel, who left Japan in January for retirement in Switzerland, after fifteen years of medical practice in Tokyo. A member of the Liebenzeller Mission, Dr. Eitel had previously served in China from 1925 to 1949.